



Eastern Meadows Church of Christ

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December 17, 2020

ELDERS:

Alan Kaye
Roy Mulkey
Mike Norman
Ted Norton

DEACONS:

Adam Bass
Allen Clements
John Cole
Michael Crow
Ryan Gotkiewicz
Tim Gotkiewicz
Tim Hatch
Steve Housley
Marquez James
Joel Kelly
Jimmy Mathews
Danny Moore
Lindsey Mulkey
Dean Norton
Randy Porterfield
Steve Sewell
Jeff Simpson

MINISTERS:

Brandon Baggett,
Involvement
Tim Gotkiewicz, Youth
& College
Steve Housley, Pulpit
& Education

SCHEDULE:

Sunday:

9:15 a.m. Bible Class
10:00 a.m. Worship

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m. Bible Study

WELCOME!

Two Weeks are remaining on our "DO WHAT YOU CAN" campaign for the end of 2020. If you are like most folks, you'll be glad to see 2020



gone. However, many thanks to all of you for participating and helping us finish 2020 strong. There is lots of work going on and plans are coming together as we prepare for 2021. Work together with us to get things done regarding all areas of God's work here at Eastern Meadows. Lend us your thoughts and ideas.

Effective planning makes implementation easier and objectives attainable making for greater rewards. But, Most importantly, it pleases God!

Remember, we are not asking you to Do What You Can't, just "DO WHAT YOU CAN". We are greatly appreciative of all you do!

Your elders

LadyBUGS Sign-up

It is time for the ladies to sign up for the 2021 LadyBUGS' Committees. An online sign-up has been sent out by email. If you would rather sign up by paper, sign up sheets are in the main foyer. Please make your choice(s) and give it to Shirley Kaye as soon as possible. Contact Shirley for questions or information.

Budget: **\$12,000.00** Contribution, 12/13: **\$9,152.00**

The guidelines for keeping safe are still in effect. Please come Sunday for 9:15 Bible Class and 10 a.m. worship. Remember it will be a sanitized, masked face, social distanced class and worship assembly. I look forward to seeing you then! -Steve

FROM THE MINISTER – STEVE HOUSLEY:

What We Are Missing. Just a reminder about what you are missing. One of my favorite fellowships of the year has always been the Christmas Dinner Fellowship. It is excellent food, fellowship, and for the past several years, we got to see some of our Eastern Meadows entertainers. This would be the last fellowship of the year that Covid has prevented us from having. So a reminder . . . we must not forget better times! And I am convinced these better times will return! I am looking forward to next year's Christmas fellowship!

What We Are Not Missing. I am thankful to be in Bible Class and worship each Lord's Day. I am thankful that we have a clean and sanitized place to assemble. I am thankful we have sufficient space in our auditorium so that all who are present can sit separate enough from other families. I am thankful that masks are worn to give an added layer of protection. I am *not* thinking that the corona virus is a hoax or that we are immune! In fact, I believe it is rampant at this present time, and we all should use caution. But I do believe that in a building at 20% capacity, families sitting separate, everyone wearing masks, etc. we should be safer than many places we are presently going. . . . But we must be vigilant. So, I am glad not to be missing Bible Class and worship!

What We Do Not Want to Miss -- We Must Not Miss! Heaven. If we miss heaven we have missed it all. Nothing else matters. Nothing in this life is more important than preparing for eternity.

The Best Gifts Ever

-The Gift of Forgiveness-

Are you wishing to give a gift that is a little more profound and enduring this holiday season? Try giving one of the best gifts ever – the gift of forgiveness! There is no better time than now to drop the heavy load of resentment and anger you have been carrying and finally extend the precious gift of forgiveness. Resolve to make this special time of the year a season for reconciliation and resolution. Extinguish the hurt and bitterness in your heart and choose to make room for love and pardon. You cannot move forward if you never choose to forgive, and you will never be able to rebuild and heal without closure. It is not weak or effete to forgive; instead, forgiveness is an attribute of the strong and resilient. "To err is human", as the old saying goes, but "to forgive, divine." God offers this special gift to all, and He is tenderly pleading for us to receive this proof of His divine love and share it with others.

Forgiveness is a gift God wants to give us! Hallelujah – because we need it! Our lives are littered with moments that have broken the heart of God. We have all missed the mark, failed to meet our Heavenly Father's expectations, and sinned against Him. Though we have failed and offended our God, we have never been able to commit a single sin to separate ourselves from His infinite love. Since God loved us, "he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish



but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus came to be the Savior we needed even though He is not the Savior we deserved. Through Jesus, God offers the gift of complete and total forgiveness! As Paul said, "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

Forgiveness is a gift I need to give myself! Many Christians wrestle with doubts concerning their salvation due to guilt over past sins. However, we can learn to move past our guilt when we accept and trust God's saving grace. God forgives and forgets when he pardons! As He promised the nation of Israel, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more" (Hebrews 10:17; cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34). Your past sins have been blotted out just as if they were never committed, and they will never be held against you again. Indescribable freedom is found in knowing that "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12).

Forgiveness is a gift I should give others! Jesus said, "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). It only makes sense to extend pardon to others since God was willing to offer forgiveness to us. In fact, the Savior reminds us that "if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:15). An unforgiving heart is an unforgiven heart! Likewise, an unforgiving heart is one that is full of bitterness, and a heart full of bitterness can never truly love. You hold the key to help release another from the mistakes of their past. Don't confine them as a prisoner forever; learn to forgive them! In turn, you'll be set free too!

Do the most loving thing you can do this holiday season – give the gift of forgiveness! Accept God's saving grace, find the forgiveness you need, and share that liberating grace with someone else. Learn to forgive and be forgiven. The road to forgiveness and reconciliation might not be an easy journey to take, but the destination will surely be worth it in the end!

– Brandon Baggett

ANNOUNCEMENTS 12/17/20

December 20, 2020 / Leading the congregation in:

Scripture Reading:

A.M.: Landon Evans

Main Prayer:

A.M.: Brooks Housley

Closing Prayer:

A.M.: Mark Evans

Singing:

A.M.: Paul Clements

Security (During Services): Ron Hoskinson / Security (Building Lock-up After Services): Alan Kaye

With the restrictions caused by COVID-19, it is difficult to have an accurate report of our members who are ill.

SICK: GLADYS CLEMENTS is scheduled for surgery Monday, Dec. 21. CASS CHANDLER, Russ Chandler's brother, is scheduled for open-heart surgery Friday, Dec. 18, in Birmingham. LYDIA EGUEBE is home after being in the hospital with pneumonia. The BAGGETT FAMILY and the BAILEY FAMILY have been in quarantine. GWEN MANN and her parents have tested positive for COVID. Continue to remember our members listed on our Sunday-Evening-Evangelism Prayer List. Shut-ins: LANETTE TAYLOR, OPAL SULLIVAN, MARIAN SIKES, MARGARET GRAVES, LEON & CHARLOTTE JACKSON. Battling Cancer: MIKE NORMAN, CHARLES HENDERSON, JAY ROBERTS, DUSTY POUNCEY.

PRAYER REQUEST LIST: (Various Issues): CARSON DAVIS, DON SIMMONS, LINDA DOBYNS, JUDY MILLER, MYRA HUGHES, BECKY TUCKER, MARY SEARIGHT, BENNIE JINRIGHT. (Battling Cancer): LANISE KIRK, DARNELL STROTHER, NINA JOSEPH, LISA DOBBS, BJ BUCHMANN, PAT NORMAN, SANDRA MISSILDINE, ANDY MULLINS, DANNY MOORE (*This is the Sutton's nephew, Not EM's Danny Moore*), CHRIS HETHCOX, JUDY CURTIN, LEIGH BROWN. (Other) The SPIRITUALLY ILL—weak and wayward members.

THANK YOU: Many thanks to everyone who made the nice snack baskets. I enjoyed the treats. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Love, Lanette Taylor

BABY SHOWER: There will be a Baby Shower in honor of CAITLIN BAGGETT on Sunday, Dec. 27, 1:30-3:00 PM (Come & Go), in the Fellowship Hall. Gift cards to Target or Amazon are requested, or give money to Linda Simpson towards a gift card. COVID guidelines will be observed. A shower sign-up list will be posted soon.

APOLOGETICS Press \$50 K MATCHING CHALLENGE: Apologetics Press has reached 85% of their goal of 50K. For every dollar donated before Dec. 25, their supporter will donate a dollar - up to \$50,000. Any amount of donation will help and every dollar donated will be used to assist in reaching the lost and edifying the saved. You may donate online at <https://store.apologeticspress.org/products/donation> or mail to Apologetics Press, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL, 36117.

BIBLE CLASSES: SUNDAYS @ 9:15 AM & WEDNESDAYS @ 6:30 PM

SUNDAY-EVENING-EVANGELISM: Packets containing SEE Prayer List and cards are posted at the front and midway foyers. Be sure to pick up a packet and send cards to the ones you choose.

DECEMBER STANDBY TEAM—#1

ELDER OF THE MONTH / ON CALL: The Elder of the Month for December is **MIKE NORMAN**. Contact information for Mike: (334) 306-7583; mikenorman7583@yahoo.com.



Doors in the Word of God

Doors in the Word of God can be hopeful or hopeless. Unfortunately, man sometimes closes a door against the Lord. How often do we limit God by refusing to let Him in? The rich young ruler turned away from the Lord rather than sell his possessions and give the money to the poor (Matthew 19:22). The people of Jerusalem would not get close to the very Lord who came to deliver them words of truth (Matthew 23:37). The church in Laodicea heard the Lord say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). It is sad to think an assembly of Christians would not let the Lord inside.

Our loving Father has promised to give His children protection. The story of Noah includes, "So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:16). Behind that door, Noah, his family and the animals he had taken in remained safe, while all other flesh died. The devil correctly charged God with putting a protective barrier around Job (Job 1:10). Even in times of temptation, He will provide a way of escape (2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13).



Paul understood it is within the power of the Sovereign of the universe to give His people a door to tell the good news. God placed doors before the apostle in Ephesus and Troas (1 Corinthians 16:8-9; 2 Corinthians 2:12). Christians need to pray for contact with seeking souls today.

Each of us has an important choice to make. We can close the door against God, losing the many blessings He has promised. Or, we can obey Him and find doors closed around us to keep us safe. Additionally, those choosing God's protection must ask for open doors to tell others the Gospel. "Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had **opened the door of faith to the Gentiles**" (Acts 14:27 NKJV).

--Gary C. Hampton, *Gospel Gazette Online*